

In the Claims

1. (currently amended) A method of electronically signing a hypertext markup language form page, comprising:  
loading said hypertext markup language form page into a browser application;  
merging user-entered field values with said hypertext markup language form page to generate a merged page; and  
generating an electronic signature for ~~information in said hypertext markup language form~~ said merged page from within said browser application.
2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said electronic signature is generated based at least in part on ~~comprises~~ a public key infrastructure digital certificate.
3. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said hypertext markup language form page comprises at least one data field.
- 4-6. (cancelled)
7. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising attaching said electronic signature to said hypertext markup language form page.
8. (currently amended) The method of claim 7, wherein said attaching comprises appending a digital signature onto the end of a file containing said hypertext markup language form page in a comment tag.
9. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein said attaching further comprises prepending a text header onto said file in another comment tag.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 7, further comprising transmitting said hypertext markup language form page with said attached electronic signature to a web server.
11. (original) The method of claim 10, wherein said transmitting to said web server comprises transmitting to a web server for processing by a common gateway interface script.
12. (currently amended) A method of verifying an electronic signature of a hypertext markup language form page, comprising:
  - loading said hypertext markup language form page into a browser application, wherein said hypertext markup language form page comprises a merged page, said merged page comprising user-entered field values that have been merged into an associated form template; and
  - generating an electronic signature for ~~information in said hypertext markup language form~~ said merged page from within said browser application; and
  - comparing said electronic signature with a stored electronic signature in said hypertext markup language form page.
13. (original) The method of claim 12, further comprising indicating whether said electronic signature matches said stored electronic signature.
14. (original) The method of claim 12, further comprising displaying information about said stored electronic signature.
15. (currently amended) An apparatus for electronically signing a hypertext markup language form page, comprising:
  - a. one or more computer readable storage media; and
  - b. computer executable program code stored in the one or more computer readable storage media, the computer executable program code comprising:
    - i. code for loading and displaying said hypertext markup language form

page;

ii. code for merging user-entered field values with said hypertext markup language form page to generate a merged page;

~~ii. iii.~~ code for generating an electronic signature for information in said hypertext markup language form merged page from within a browser; and

~~iii.~~ iv. code for verifying an electronic signature attached to said hypertext markup language form merged page.

16. (original) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said code for generating said electronic signature comprises plugin code for said browser.

17. (original) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said code for generating said electronic signature utilizes a public key infrastructure digital certificate.

18-19. (cancelled)

20. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~19~~ 15, wherein said code for merging ~~data~~ said user-entered field values does not interfere with posting of said at least one field to a server application.

21. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said code for verifying said electronic signature comprises:

1. code for generating a new electronic signature for said information in said hypertext markup language form merged page; and

2. code for comparing said new electronic signature with said electronic signature attached to said hypertext markup language form merged page.

22. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said code for loading and

displaying said hypertext markup language form page displays said hypertext markup language form page in a first frame and displays at least one user interface button in a second frame, said at least one user interface button for initiating said code for generating said electronic signature and said code for verifying said electronic signature.